

IRAN'S POLICIES DURING WORLD WAR II

powers of the Majlis, it is paradoxical that the Constitution of 1906 (and the supplementary law of 1907) prohibits a cabinet minister from being a member of the Majlis. Thus, if a deputy was invited to join the cabinet he first resigned. In most cases the deputies gladly exchanged their positions for that of a cabinet member, but there were a few cases when a more prominent deputy did not want to lose his seat for the sake of participation in the government. This may indicate, to some extent, that in the opinion of some people the role of the Majlis was not altogether negligible.

In 1943 elections to the Fourteenth Majlis took place. Iranian elections are not held on a single day but last for a considerable time. Six months were required to complete the elections in 1943. In view of the dictatorial practices of the old regime, politically conscious public opinion had been agitated over the issue whether the elections would be really free. Rumors that the government would try to influence the elections by illegal means arose, and several papers even hinted that soldiers, disguised in civilian dress, might be employed by the government to ensure electoral victory. To combat these rumors Premier AH Soheily issued several strong denials and assurances. The real issue in these elections was not, however, the presence or lack of government intervention. Such intervention undoubtedly existed, and will probably exist in Iran for some time to come. In this respect the Iranian system does not differ significantly from Latin-American democracy.

The problem that concerned the government more than anything else was that of representation from the northern provinces. Would the traditional ruling class win the elections in the

Soviet zone or
would new men, with different ideas and loyalties,
emerge from ob-
scurity? Until the time of the 1943 elections no strong
anti-Communist
center had been organized. Thus the entire burden of
combating Rus-
sian or Communist influence in the elections fell to
the government.
The elections were conducted in an atmosphere of
rivalry among
Great Britain, the Soviet Union, and the Iranian
groups vying for
power. Except for the Communist Tudeh party the
contenders fought
for seats on a personal rather than an ideological
basis. There were no
party machines to back up the candidates. Very often
the electoral
struggle was reduced to the amount of money a
candidate could dis-